

exercises these powers with discernment, courage, and humility. These are commitments not just to philosophy but of character. My nominees today and in the years to come will be notable for their distinction and accomplishments, and all will be exceptional for their humanity and their integrity.

With today's 11 nominees, we continue a constitutional process that involves all three branches of Government. For many weeks now, we have sought and received advice from Senators of both parties. I now submit these nominations in good faith, trusting that good faith will also be extended by the United States Senate.

Over the years, we have seen how the confirmation process can be turned to other ends. We have seen political battles played out in committee hearings, battles that have little to do with the merits of the person sitting before the committee. This is not

good for the Senate, for our courts, or for the country.

There are today over 100 vacancies on the Federal courts, causing backlogs, frustration, and delay of justice. I urge Senators of both parties to rise above the bitterness of the past, to provide a fair hearing and a prompt vote to every nominee. That should be the case for no matter who lives in this house and no matter who controls the Senate.

I ask for the return of civility and dignity to the confirmation process. And with this distinguished group of nominees awaiting confirmation, there is no better opportunity than right now. I congratulate all of you on your service past and for your service to come.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Budget *May 9, 2001*

Today's bipartisan budget vote in the House is a victory for fairness and the American people. I commend Republicans and Democrats for joining together to pass a budget framework that will return money to the taxpayers and provide reasonable

spending increases. The economy continues to show troubling signs, and we must take decisive steps, like this vote today, to ensure sound fiscal policy. The American people can take heart that tax relief is one important step closer to reality.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Education Reform Legislation *May 9, 2001*

I commend members of the House Education and Workforce Committee for taking the first step toward reforming America's education system and making sure no child is left behind. This legislation includes monumental reforms that promote real ac-

countability, annual testing, and funding flexibility. Parents need to know if their children are making progress, and this legislation meets that priority. I am also pleased that this bill gives unprecedented freedom and flexibility to States and local